Using the
Instructional Conversation
Effectively

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Session Overview

- Sharing Some Background Information
- Defining The Instructional Conversation
- Planning tips for enacting Instructional Conversations
- Sample Videos

Some Background

- The national Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE)
- Synthesized 40 years of research on what works for culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students

CREDE
Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence

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Teaching diverse learners requires *specialized knowledge*

- **Ways of Teaching**
- **Ways of Thinking**

Classrooms of the **Common Tradition**

- Teacher makes assignments, usually from text or lecture;
- Students attempt to master assignments individually;
- Students expected to recite facts either in writing or orally;
- Dominated by whole class instruction
- Lecture-dominated ("cemetery approach")
- Teacher viewed as the only "teacher" and holds all the power in the classroom.

In Contrast in the Transformed Classroom:

- Teacher and students are working together on real products and real problems;
- Activities are rich in language and designed to develop academic language skills;
- Activities are meaningful, and relate to students' lives and experiences;
- Teachers challenge students to apply their learning in complex ways to solve meaningful problems;
- Primary teaching interaction is conversation, not lecture;

(Transformed continued)

- A variety of learning activities are in progress simultaneously;
- Students have systematic opportunities to work with all other classmates;
- Students learn and demonstrate self-control and common values, such as hard work, rich learning, helpfulness to others, and mutual respect;
- All students have access to learning and are held to high expectations regardless of their ethnicity, language, or socio-economic status.

Culminating in the Standards for Effective Pedagogy

(Ways of Teaching)

Standards for Effective Pedagogy

Standard 1: Joint Productive Activity (JPA)
Teacher and Students Producing Together
Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teacher and students.
Enacting Level: The teacher and a small group of students collaborate on a shared product.

Standard 2: Language and Literacy Development (LLD)
Developing Language and Literacy Across the Curriculum
Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction across the curriculum.
Enacting Level: The teacher provides structured opportunities for students to engage in sustained reading, writing, or speaking activities, and assists academic language use or literacy development by questioning, rephrasing, or modeling.

Standard 3: Contextualization (CTX)
Making Meaning: Connecting School to Students' Lives
Connect teaching and curriculum to experiences and skills of students' home and community.
Enacting Level: The teacher integrates the new activity/information with what students already know from home, school, or community.

Standard 4: Challenging Activities (CA)
Teaching Complex Thinking
Challenge students toward cognitive complexity.
Enacting Level: The teacher designs and enacts challenging activities with clear standards and performance feedback, and assists the development of more complex thinking.

Standard 5: Instructional Conversation (IC)
Teaching Through Conversation
Engage students through dialogue, especially the Instructional Conversation.
Enacting Level: The teacher has a planned, goal-directed conversation with a small group of students on an academic topic; elicits student talk by questioning, listening, and responding to assess and assist student understanding; and inquires about students' views, judgments, or rationales. Student talk occurs at higher rates than teacher talk.

CREDE Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) | http://crede.berkeley.edu
Graduate School of Education | University of California | Berkeley, CA 94720

CREDE   Culminating in

Ways of Thinking

- **Fairness**
- **Harmony & Inclusion**
- **Equity**
- **Excellence**

Fundamental Change:
Theories of Learning

- Behaviorists:
  - Observable and quantifiable behaviors.
- Cognitivists
  - Understanding consists of mental processes and structures that integrate information.
  - Learning is the construction of meaning from experience. Apply general knowledge to specific situations.
- Socioculturalists:
  - Experts and novices work together through conversation to close the gap between what a child can do alone and what a child can do with assistance.

Primary Assumptions of
Sociocultural Theory

- Knowledge is cultural understanding and competent participation.
- Learning is social.
- Teaching is assisting.
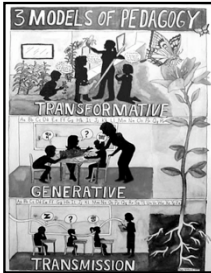- Performance is situative.

Why should we care?

Sociocultural theory and pedagogy have emerged as the research-based foundation for diversity teacher preparation and student learning.

Joan Wink

retrieved from www.joanwink.com/scheditmes/tesol-part1.pdf

- **Remember that the educational process is an active one on three levels:**
  - **the student is active**
  - **the teacher is active**
  - **and the environment created between them is an active one**
    - **(Vygotsky, 1997, p.54)**

Not Just Behavior!   Not Just the Mind!

It is the space between the teacher and the student!

Experts and novices work together through conversation to close
the gap between what a student can do alone and what a student can
do with assistance. (Sociocultural Theory)

Traditional Pedagogy	Constructivist Pedagogy	Five Standards Pedagogy
• Students read assigned text • Students taught phonics through drill and worksheets • Students work on fluency through timed individual oral readings of published materials; errors counts taken. • Students "taught" comprehension through assessment questions.	• Students choose own texts • Students taught phonics through analysis of words they read • Students work on fluency through sustained silent reading • Students taught comprehension strategies to apply to reading whole texts	• Students chose texts *with guidance* from teacher to challenge and inspire • Students taught phonics through an activity that produces a joint product, such as a game • Students work on fluency through joint readings of texts for eventual performance • Students participate in instructional conversations around texts

Ellen McIntyre, University of Louisville

Differentiate with Activity Centers

- … reorganize the classroom so that the teacher can provide the highest quality of instruction.
- …engage in cycles of assessment and assistance.

Types of Activity Centers

- **Teacher-Led Center: The teacher engages in instructional conversations (IC) with four to seven homogeneously-grouped students**
- **Independent Centers: Students work in heterogeneous groupings, independent of teacher assistance, following directions on a task card or instruction sheet**

Example of an Instructional Conversation

Let's watch and listen.

What features define
an Instructional Conversation?

What features define an Instructional Conversation?

Defining Features:
Teaching Through Conversation

- The teacher:
  - Converses with students about <u>academic topics</u> using content lexicon and concepts in small group (3 to 7 students) on a regularly scheduled basis.
  - Assures that <u>student talk occurs more frequently</u> than teacher talk in the speaking style students prefer.
  - Guides conversation to focus on students' views, judgments, and rationales <u>based on text evidence</u> and other substantive support.
  - Leads students to prepare <u>a product</u> that indicates the stated goal of that instructional conversation was achieved.

By definition the IC is:

INSTRUCTIONAL	CONVERSATIONAL
1. Thematic	1. Few known-answers
2. Activation of Background Knowledge	2. Responsiveness to student contributions
3. Direct Teaching	3. Connected discourse
4. Promotion of Complex language and expression	4. Non-threatening atmosphere
5. Elicitation of Evidence for Statements	5. General participation and self-selected turns

GOAL DIRECTED   **CONVERSATION**

Can you see it in action?

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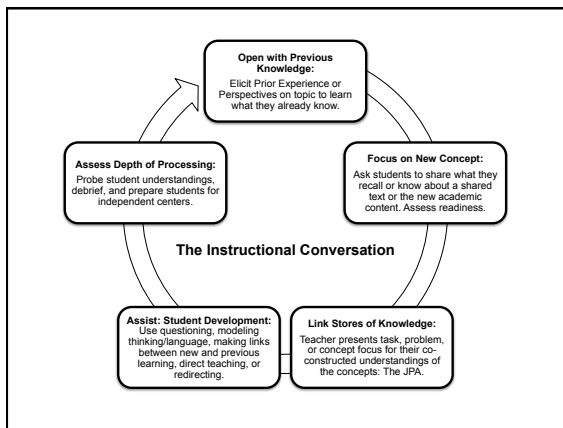## What Works Clearinghouse

- the CREDE-developed program ranked <u>first</u> in Reading achievement, and <u>second</u> in English language development
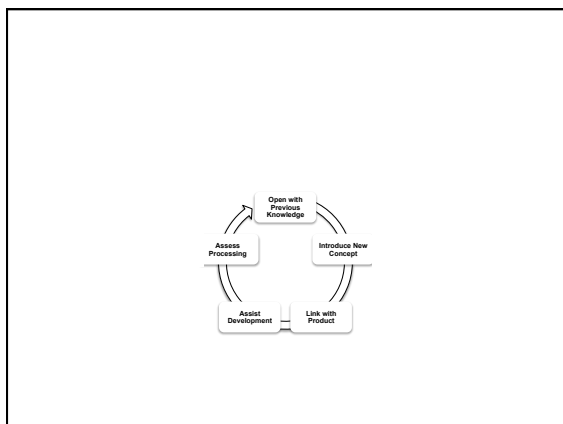

Supporting Research for Instructional Conversation

- Instructional Conversations provide English learner students with **<u>opportunities for extended discourse</u>**, which is an important principle of second language learning (Christian, 1995).
- Instructional Conversations are useful in assisting **<u>literacy development and thematic understanding</u>** of literature (Saunders, 1999; Saunders, O'Brien, Lennon, and McLean, 1998).
- Instructional conversations and contextualization greatly assisted reading comprehension and thematic understanding of **<u>both fluent and limited English proficient students</u>** (Saunders and Goldenberg, 1999).
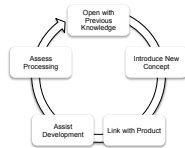
Instructional Conversations provide…

- a place for teachers to listen and hear students' knowledge about a concept: **Assess**
- opportunities to develop students' comprehension and vocabulary: **Extend**
- time for students to dialogue deeply about a concept: **Process**
- Teachers a place to provide assistance and feedback to push development within students' ZPD: **Assist**

Open with Previous Knowledge:
Elicit Prior Experience or Perspectives on topic to learn what they already know.

Focus on New Concept:
Ask students to share what they recall or know about a shared text or the new academic content. Assess readiness.

Assess Depth of Processing:
Probe student understandings, debrief, and prepare students for independent centers.

The Instructional Conversation

Assist: Student Development:
Use questioning, modeling thinking/language, making links between new and previous learning, direct teaching, or redirecting.

Link Stores of Knowledge:
Teacher presents task, problem, or concept focus for their co-constructed understandings of the concepts: The JPA.

Open with Previous Knowledge

Introduce New Concept

Assess Processing

Link with Product

Assist Development

Instructional Conversations

Open with Previous Knowledge → Introduce New Concept → Link with Product → Assist Development → Assess Processing
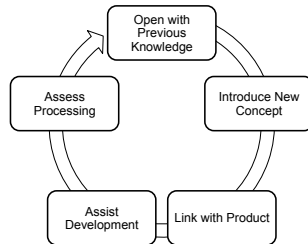

Writing an Instructional Conversation Together:

• Form grade-level pairs or small groups
• Together, select a topic for an IC that works for your grade level and content area
• Use the IC lesson planning guide to plan a quality IC.
• Be prepared to share and ask questions.

Open with Previous Knowledge → Introduce New Concept → Link with Product → Assist Development → Assess Processing

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Sample Unit

Day 1 Briefing   Instructional Conversation   Chapter Books

Habitat Rummy   I Wonder I Notice   Next Day Debrief WC

Debriefing

- What were some of your key insights from today's session?
- What questions do you have?

- My email:
  - ateemant@iupui.edu

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